

**BY-LAWS  
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS  
FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

**ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP**

The Board of Zoning Appeals ("BZA") shall consist of seven (7) members appointed in accordance with Sec. 15.2-2308 of the Code of Virginia (as amended).

**ARTICLE II. OFFICERS**

1. The BZA shall elect a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary, and appoint a Clerk annually, at its first meeting each calendar year.
2. In the event any officer's position becomes vacant at any time during the year, an election shall be held at the earliest opportunity to fill the vacancy.
3. The Chair shall preside at all meetings and hearings of the BZA. The Chair shall decide all points of order and procedure and shall appoint any committees and committee chairs that may be found necessary. The Chair and the Clerk shall have the authority to administer oaths.
4. The Vice-Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence. In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Secretary shall assume the duties of the Chair. In the absence of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary, an acting Chair shall be selected by the members present to preside over the meeting.
5. The Clerk may be appointed by the BZA in accordance with Sec. 15.2-2308(D) of the Code of Virginia (as amended). A Deputy or substitute Clerk may serve in the absence of the Clerk.

The Clerk or the staff of the Department of Planning and Development shall:

- a. prepare official correspondence at the direction of the BZA;
- b. send out notices required by these By-laws, the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance, and the Code of Virginia;
- c. keep the minutes and records of the BZA's proceedings;
- d. keep a file on each case which comes before the BZA;
- e. send copies of appeals and applications to the Planning Commission as required by the Zoning Ordinance;
- f. maintain other BZA records;
- g. in response to Writs of Certiorari served upon the BZA, prepare and file with the court, in a timely fashion, certified copies of the record of any BZA decision that has been appealed; and

- h. prepare and file the Annual Report of the BZA with the Board of Supervisors.
- 6. The Secretary shall notify the Circuit Court of any vacancies on the BZA, and shall perform duties as assigned by the Board.

### **ARTICLE III. MEETINGS, QUORUM AND VOTING**

- 1. The regular meetings of the BZA shall be held on Wednesdays as needed each month. Each regular meeting shall begin at 9:00 a.m.
- 2. Special meetings may be called by the Chair provided at least five (5) days notice of such meeting is given to each member electronically or in writing.
- 3. All meetings shall be open to the public unless a closed meeting is held pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Sec. 2.2-3700, et seq., Code of Virginia (as amended).
- 4. Quorum.
  - a. A quorum shall be necessary to transact any BZA business or for the BZA to hold a meeting.
  - b. A quorum shall consist of four (4) members (i.e., a majority) of the BZA.
- 5. Voting.
  - a. The concurring vote of four (4) members (i.e., a simple majority of the membership) shall be required to:
    - (i) grant variances and special permits;
    - (ii) reverse decisions or determinations of the Zoning Administrator (i.e., appeals);
    - (iii) act contrary to recommendations made by the Planning Commission that an application for a special permit be denied or that specified conditions be prescribed in connection with a particular special permit or variance, pursuant to Sec. 19-206, Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance ("Zoning Ordinance");
    - (iv) amend district maps;
    - (v) revoke special permits;
    - (vi) grant a rehearing; and,
    - (vii) amend these By-Laws.
  - b. The concurring vote of a majority of all members present and voting, or such other greater number as may be required by the Code of Virginia or the Zoning Ordinance, shall be required to effect all other actions of the Board.
  - c. Disclosure by a BZA member.

- (i) A member shall make a disclosure of the member's interest in a specific matter before the BZA when required by law.
    - (ii) Any disclosure shall be announced and made a part of the record of the BZA prior to the case being heard or as soon as the basis for disclosure is discovered.
  - d. Disqualification of a BZA member.
    - (i) A member shall be disqualified to act on a specific matter before the BZA when required by law. The reason for disqualification shall be made a part of the record of the BZA.
    - (ii) A member may be disqualified under any circumstance, which in the opinion of the individual member, would create an appearance of impropriety or unfairness. The decision to be disqualified shall be entered into the record of the BZA, but a member need not disclose the reasons for the disqualification.
    - (iii) Any disqualification shall be announced and made a part of the record of the BZA prior to the case being heard or as soon as the basis for disqualification is discovered.
- 6. The order of business at all regular meetings of the BZA shall be as follows:
  - a. Call to order.
  - b. Business of members of the BZA.
  - c. Review of BZA Procedure.
  - d. Public hearings of scheduled, continued, and deferred for decision items.
  - e. After Agenda items, including action items (i.e., extensions of time, approval of minutes of previous meetings as received, and changes of permittee).
  - f. Unscheduled items.
  - g. Adjournment.
- 7. The BZA may adjourn a regular meeting if all applications or other matters scheduled for hearing cannot be disposed of on the day set. Adjournment shall be mandatory six (6) hours after the start of the regular meeting, unless waived by the BZA; and no later than ten (10) hours after the start of the meeting.
- 8. Special provisions addressing remote participation by BZA members pursuant to Va. Code section 2.2-3708.2, during periods of emergency declared by the Governor

and under any continuity ordinances adopted by the Board of Supervisors pursuant to section 15.2-1413 are addressed in Article VIII and shall supplement or supersede the provisions of Article III as appropriate.

#### **ARTICLE IV. DUTIES**

It shall be the duty of the BZA, in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 15.2-2309 of the Code of Virginia (as amended), to hear and decide cases involving the following:

1. Variances in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and Code of Virginia.
2. Special permits in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and Code of Virginia.
3. Appeals from a decision of the Zoning Administrator, or other administrative officer, in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and Code of Virginia.
4. Applications for the interpretations of the district map where there is any uncertainty as to the location of the district boundary.
5. Revocations of special permits.

#### **ARTICLE V. APPLICATIONS TO THE BZA**

1. All applications to the BZA for appeals, variances, and special permits shall be made on forms supplied by the Department of Planning and Development. All other applications or requests, for which there is no required form, shall be made in writing.
2. All applications shall include all of the information required by the Zoning Ordinance before being scheduled for public hearing.

#### **ARTICLE VI. PROCESSING OF APPLICATION**

1. All applications shall be filed with the Department of Planning and Development. The processing and scheduling of applications shall comply with the requirements of the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance and the Code of Virginia.
2. The Clerk of the BZA shall notify the applicants in writing of the date, time and place of the scheduled public hearing.
3. The Clerk shall, in accordance with the Code of Virginia and the Zoning Ordinance, cause to be advertised by publication, in a newspaper of general circulation in the area of the application, the required legal notice of the application.

4. The applicant shall be responsible for fulfilling all applicable notice requirements to abutting and other property owners. This notice shall be by registered or certified mail, with return receipts by the recipients.
5. The staff of the Department of Planning and Development shall prepare and distribute a staff report and any pertinent information to the BZA and the applicant, and the appellant and other person aggrieved under Sec. 15.2-2314 of the Code of Virginia before the scheduled public hearing in accordance with Sec. 15.2-2308.1 of the Code of Virginia (as amended), when applicable.
6. The BZA, staff, and applicants shall comply with the provisions of Sec. 15.2-2308.1 of the Code of Virginia (as amended) with respect to certain ex parte communications, when applicable.

#### **ARTICLE VII. THE HEARING**

1. The Chair announces the public hearing and the subject matter:
  - a. The Chair may, in its discretion, remind all parties present that the Code of Virginia requires a concurring vote of four (4) members of the BZA to approve a variance, to approve or revoke a special permit, and, in an appeal, to reverse the determination of the Zoning Administrator or other officer.
  - b. No cross-examination or questions of speakers testifying shall be permitted, except by members of the BZA, without permission of the Chair.
  - c. The Chair or the Clerk shall swear in all staff members and speakers wishing to testify.
2. The Chair calls on the staff members of the Department of Planning and Development to identify the property, describe the application and background of the case, and present staff's position, if applicable. The staff's presentation shall be limited to ten (10) minutes.
3. BZA members may pose questions to staff members.
4. Chair calls on the applicant or appellant and/or their authorized agent or attorney to present the applicant's or appellant's position. This presentation shall be limited to ten (10) minutes.
5. BZA members may pose questions to the applicant or appellant and/or their authorized agent or attorney.
6. The Chair calls for testimony from any person present, including any party aggrieved under Section 15.2-2314 of the Code of Virginia (as amended), emphasizing that testimony should be relevant and limited to the precise issue that is the subject of the hearing. This testimony shall be limited to three (3) minutes for individuals and

five (5) minutes for representatives of groups, e.g., civic, condominium and homeowners associations. Each individual, organization or group shall be limited to one (1) presentation unless the Chair determines otherwise.

7. The Chair calls on the staff of the Department of Planning and Development to offer rebuttal or additional remarks, if desired.
8. The Chair calls on the applicant or appellant and/or their authorized agent or attorney to offer rebuttal or additional remarks, if desired.
9. BZA members may pose final questions to applicant, appellant and/or their authorized agent or attorney or the staff member.
10. The Chairperson shall conduct the hearing in a fair and orderly manner. The time periods set forth herein may be modified at the discretion of the BZA provided the BZA shall offer an equal amount of time in a hearing on the case to the applicant, appellant, or other person aggrieved under Sec. 15.2-2314 of the Code of Virginia (as amended) and the staff. Questions by the BZA will not count against a speaker's time.
11. The Chair closes the public hearing.
12. The BZA may discuss the matter and take action. Decisions, action to be taken, and orders of the BZA shall be taken in the form of a motion or resolution. The form and scope of the BZA decision shall be in accordance with Sec. 15.2-2309 of the Code of Virginia (as amended).
13. A decision of the BZA shall be considered a "final decision" for purposes of appeal when the BZA has made a decision that: (1) resolves the merits of the application before the BZA, or (2) effects a dismissal of the case with prejudice. The thirty (30) day appeal period to the Circuit Court shall commence upon the final decision of the BZA.

The final decision of the BZA shall be promptly filed with the Clerk and become a part of the BZA's public record. The Clerk shall promptly prepare and provide to the applicant or appellant the BZA's final decision on the application.

14. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with these By-Laws, the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance, the Code of Virginia, and Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, as amended, to the extent that Robert's is not inconsistent.
15. Special provisions addressing remote participation by BZA members pursuant to Va. Code section 2.2-3708.2, during periods of emergency declared by the Governor and under any continuity ordinances adopted by the Board of Supervisors pursuant to section 15.2-1413 are addressed in Article VIII and shall supplement or supersede the provisions of Article VII as appropriate.

**ARTICLE VIII. SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS UNDER VA. CODE SECTION 2.2-3708.2, DURING EMERGENCIES DECLARED BY THE GOVERNOR AND UNDER CONTINUITY ORDINANCES ADOPTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 15.2-1413.**

1. Members of the BZA may participate from remote locations in meetings where a quorum is physically assembled at a single meeting place when the requirements of Va. Code section 2.2-3708.2 A 1 and 2 are met, and the BZA hereby consents to such participation, provided that the other requirements imposed by the statute are met.
2. Members of the BZA may participate from remote locations when no quorum is physically assembled at a single meeting place when authorized under a declaration of emergency by the Governor pursuant to Va. Code section 44-146.17, under the applicable terms of a continuity ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Va. Code section 15.2-1413, or under any other applicable legal authority.
3. Advance notice that meetings may or will be held remotely shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of sections of 2.2-3708.2, and any other specific requirements of the enabling authority under which the BZA is convening.
4. When some or all members of the BZA are participating remotely in a meeting, the Chair or other presiding officer shall announce the reasons for such remote participation, the location of the remote participants, and provide such other information regarding such participation as is required by law. The Chair or other presiding officer may impose reasonable rules of procedure for determining how and in what order remote participants will be acknowledged for speaking purposes.
5. The notices required by subsection 3 shall describe the options available for participation by members of the public and the Chair or other presiding officer shall describe the manner and order in which speakers will be acknowledged.
6. The Clerk to the BZA shall see that special requirements pertaining to the posting of a transcript or recording of remote participation meetings are met.

**ARTICLE IX. RECORDS**

1. A file containing all relevant material and decisions, including any final decision, relating to each case shall be kept by the Department of Planning and Development staff as part of the records of the BZA.
2. All records of the BZA shall be public records, unless they are exempted from disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Sec. 2.2-3700, et seq., of the Code of Virginia (as amended).

**ARTICLE X. SEVERABILITY**

If any word, clause, sentence, article, section, subsection or other part or parts of these By-Laws shall be held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, such unconstitutionality or invalidity shall not affect any of the remaining parts of these By-Laws, nor shall it affect any application of these By-Laws that may be given effect without the unconstitutional or invalid parts, and to this end, all provisions of these By-Laws are hereby declared to be severable.

**ARTICLE XI. ADOPTION**

These By-Laws have been adopted by the unanimous vote of the Board of Zoning Appeals, all members thereof being present, on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of June 1969.

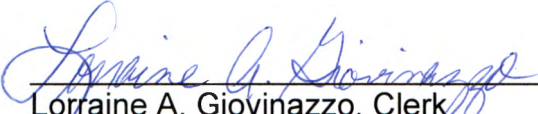
- Revised: 3-10-70 (Signed) Daniel Smith, Chairperson  
(Signed) Betty Haines, Clerk
- Revised: 8-1-75 (Signed) Daniel Smith, Chairperson  
(Signed) Jane Kelsey, Clerk
- Revised: 9-23-80 (Signed) Daniel Smith, Chairperson  
(Signed) Sandra L. Hicks, Clerk
- Revised: 5-18-82 (Signed) Daniel Smith, Chairperson  
(Signed) Sandra L. Hicks, Clerk
- Revised: 1-25-83 (Signed) Daniel Smith, Chairperson  
(Signed) Sandra L. Hicks, Clerk
- Revised: 11-6-86 (Signed) Daniel Smith, Chairperson  
(Signed) Betsy S. Hurtt, Clerk
- Revised: 1-10-91 (Signed) Daniel Smith, Chairperson  
(Signed) Betsy S. Hurtt, Clerk
- Revised: 1-26-93 (Signed) Daniel Smith, Chairperson  
(Signed) Betsy S. Hurtt, Clerk
- Revised: 6-27-06 (Signed) John P. DiGiulian, Chairperson  
(Signed) Kathleen A. Knoth, Clerk
- Revised: 5-1-07 (Signed) John F. Ribble III, Chairperson  
(Signed) Kathleen A. Knoth, Clerk
- Revised: 11-17-10 (Signed) John F. Ribble III, Chairperson  
(Signed) Kathleen A. Knoth, Clerk



Revised: 06-20-16 (Signed) John F. Ribble III, Chairperson  
(Signed) Lorraine A. Giovinazzo, Clerk

Revised: 01-15-20 (Signed) John F. Ribble, III, Chairperson  
(Signed) Lorraine A. Giovinazzo, Clerk

Revised: 07-15-2020:

  
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Lorraine A. Giovinazzo, Clerk  
Board of Zoning Appeals

  
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John F. Ribble III, Chair  
Board of Zoning Appeals